

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2005, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published and adopted new regulations (10(j) Rule) governing wolf management within the Nonessential Experimental Population Areas of Idaho south of Interstate Highway 90 (Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Regulation for Nonessential Experimental Populations of the Western Distinct Population Segment of the Gray Wolf [50 CFR Part 17.84]). The new 10(j) Rule allowed states, with USFWS-approved wolf management plans, to petition the Secretary of Interior for certain wolf management authorities as an interim measure to delisting. In January 2006, the Secretary of Interior and the Governor of Idaho signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), which transferred most wolf management responsibilities to the State of Idaho. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) is the primary state agency responsible for carrying out wolf management activities in Idaho. In April 2005, the Governor of Idaho and the Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) signed an MOA that outlined responsibilities between the State of Idaho and the NPT in regards to wolf conservation and management. The USFWS published a draft delisting rule in February 2007 and a final is scheduled for February 2008. This annual progress report is a cooperative effort between the IDFG and the NPT with contributions from U. S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services (WS) summarizing wolf activity and related management in Idaho during 2007.

During 2007, biologists documented 83 resident wolf packs in Idaho and all of those remained by the end of the year. A minimum of 489 wolves was observed, and the minimum population was estimated at 732 wolves (Appendix A). In addition, there were 13 documented border packs counted for Montana and Wyoming that established territories straddling the Idaho state boundary and likely spent some time in Idaho. Of the 59 packs known to have reproduced, 43 packs qualified as breeding pairs by the end of the year. These 59 reproductive packs produced a minimum 200 pups.

In Idaho, wolf packs ranged from the Canadian border south to Interstate Highway 84, and from the Oregon border east to the Montana and Wyoming borders. Dispersing wolves were occasionally reported in previously unoccupied areas. Seventeen previously unknown packs were documented for the first time during 2007. Three hundred eighty-two wolf observations were reported on IDFG's online website report form during 2007.

Seventy-eight wolves were confirmed to have died in Idaho in 2007. Of known mortalities, agency control and legal landowner take in response to wolf-livestock depredation accounted for 50 deaths, other human causes (including illegal take) 18 deaths, 8 unknown causes, and 2 wolves died of natural causes.

During the 2007 calendar year, 73 cattle, 185 sheep, and 14 dogs were classified by WS as confirmed or probable kills by wolves.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wolf management in Idaho is a cooperative effort between the State of Idaho, NPT, WS, and the USFWS. The Governor's Office of Species Conservation directors Jim Caswell and Nate Fisher, and especially program advisor Jeff Allen provided insight, assistance, and oversight. The NPT's Executive Committee and Wildlife Program Director Keith Lawrence provided support and input. Mark Collinge, George Graves, Todd Grimm, Rick Williamson, and other WS field personnel helped resolve wolf depredations on livestock. Ed Bangs, Jeff Foss, Steve Duke, Robert Romero, Scott Bragonier, Scott Kabasa, and Scott Winkler with the USFWS provided support and assistance in wolf management responsibilities. Jim Unsworth and Brad Compton provided support and input and numerous strategy sessions along with making some wolf control calls. We would also like to thank all the Outfitters and Guides for their information and assistance in the backcountry.

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Cover photo shot by Laura Robinson during winter capture of alpha female B109 of the Warm Springs pack.

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